

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2557
ANSWERED ON:10.12.2012
ERADICATION OF BONDED LABOUR
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Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether despite the stringent enforcement of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976; and making bonded labour illegal, the practice of bonded labour exists in certain pockets including agricultural sector in different States;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the measures undertaken by the Government to identify such areas;
- (c) the number of cases registered in this regard along with the action initiated against those engaged in bonded labour;
- (d) whether the National Human Rights Commission has; expressed its concern over the large number of such cases across the country; and
- (e) the corrective measures; being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI KODIKUNNL SURESH)

(a) & (b): The Bonded Labour System has been abolished by law throughout the country with effect from 25th October, 1975 under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Ordinance which was replaced by the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976. The responsibility for implementing the Act lies with the State Governments. As and when existence of bonded labour is detected, such persons are identified for rehabilitation. According to the reports received from the State Governments, the total number of bonded labourers identified and released is 2,94,155 as on 31.3.2012,

The responsibility for rehabilitating the freed bonded labourers lies with the respective State Governments. In order to assist the State Governments in the task of rehabilitation of identified and released bonded labourers, a Centrally Sponsored Plain Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour is in operation since May, 1978. Under the scheme, rehabilitation assistance @ Rs. 20,000/- per bonded labourer is provided which is equally shared by the Central and State Government. The scheme also provides for financial assistance to the State Governments/UTs for conducting surveys, awareness generation activities and evaluatory studies.

(c) to (e): Under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, States/Union Territories are mandated to implement the provisions of the Act. The District and Sub-Divisional Magistrates and the Vigilance Committees constituted under the Act have been entrusted with certain duties/responsibilities for implementation of the Act. The Act provides for penalties for enforcement of bonded labour. The information regarding the number of cases registered and action initiated against those engaged in bonded labour is not maintained at central level.

National Human Rights Commission has been monitoring the implementation of Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act as per the directives of Supreme Court. The Commission organizes workshops periodically to familiarize and sensitize District Magistrates, Sub-Divisional Magistrates, Police Officers and functionaries from Labour Departments about the identification, release and rehabilitation of bonded labour.

Special Group under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Labour & Employment has been constituted to review and monitor the implementation of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act. The Group holds region wise meetings from time to time to impress upon the State Governments to effectively implement the Act.

Central Government and State Government of Tamil Nadu in collaboration with ILO launched a pilot project in the State for the purpose of reducing vulnerability to bondage through promotion of decent work. Attempt is now being made to replicate this approach in some other states of the country.